

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Estelline School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2004-2005**

**Team Members:** Chris Sargent and Rita Pettigrew

**Dates of On Site Visit:** January 19, 2005

**Date of Report:** January 21, 2005

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- B – District/agency instructional staff information
- C – Suspension and expulsion information
- D – Statewide assessment information
- E – Enrollment information
- F – Placement alternatives
- G – Disabling conditions

- H – Exiting information
- Parent survey, referrals, publications of child find notices
- Comprehensive plan
- Yearly child find results

#### **Promising Practices:**

The steering committee concluded the junior kindergarten program and the analysis of student data as areas of promising practice for the district.

#### **Meets Requirements:**

The steering committee concluded the school district has appropriate child find procedures for student's age birth through 21. The child find procedures found in the comprehensive plan include a public awareness campaign, documentation, child count and screening. The school has sufficient pre-referral interventions and support services available to maintain at risk students in the general education program. A pre-referral form is completed which gives modifications and ideas for the classroom teacher. The school district has a system for receiving and documenting referrals.

Teachers at the elementary and secondary level are given copies of each child's individual education program (IEP) and are provided with updated information after each IEP meeting. Teachers meet as often as needed to discuss problems of concern and brainstorm ideas to benefit students.

Students placed in a private school placed by the district are afforded all rights and services in accordance with requirements of IDEA. The school district adheres to the state guidelines for reporting students suspended, expelled, or who have dropped out of school.

Paraprofessionals attended an in-service in February 2004, and attended the Boys Town Training in August of 2004. They are under the supervision of certified staff to address individual student needs.

#### **Needs Improvement:**

The steering committee concluded that paraprofessional performance is not evaluated. One of the paraprofessionals has passed the test to be highly qualified. Two other paraprofessionals will retire before the deadline.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Promising practice**

The school district offers a junior kindergarten program two days a week as an interim step to kindergarten. Students scoring low on the screening for kindergarten are offered this program. Some parents send their children to kindergarten and are offered this program on their off days from kindergarten. Other parents enroll their child in the junior kindergarten program, and do not begin kindergarten until the following year.

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

#### **Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needing improvement under general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- C – Suspension and expulsion information
- E – Enrollment information
- F – Placement alternatives
- K – Early intervention exit information
- L - Complaint data
- M – Due process hearing data
- N – Monitoring data
- Age at referral
- Number of students screened
- Personnel development
- Preschool data
- School age student data
- Personnel training
- Budget information
- Comprehensive plan
- Surveys

### **Meets Requirements**

The steering committee concluded school district provides FAPE for children birth through 21 years. Current practice and past compliance reviews reflect the districts commitment to ensure FAPE in provided for all students.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- G – Disabling conditions
- H – Exiting information
- I – Age and placement alternative data
- J – Data by disabling condition and placement
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parent Teacher report forms
- Initial referral

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district provides parents written notice five days prior to proposing or refusing to initiate or change the child's identification or evaluation. Areas to be evaluated are determined by a "team" of people including the referring person, special education teacher, parent, school psychologist and administrator. Parent permission is obtained prior to the evaluation. More than one evaluation is conducted for each student and transition evaluations are completed prior to the student turning 16 years old.

Test results are explained to parents and copies of the evaluation reports are sent to parents with the prior notice for the IEP meeting or given to them at the meeting. Reevaluations are completed to re-determine eligibility and develop a program to meet the student's needs. A multidisciplinary team written report is developed for all students suspected of having a learning disability.

### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded all tests listed on the prior notice/consent need to be consistently administered and that consent needs to be obtained for all tests given.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee. Through a review of five current student evaluations the team found that all evaluations listed on the prior notice/consent were administered and that consent was obtained for all test given. Therefore, the team concluded this area meets requirements.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- L - Complaint data

- M – Due process hearing data
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental right document
- Consent and prior notice forms
- Public awareness information
- FERPA disclosure

### **Meets Requirements**

The steering committee concluded parents are notified of their rights and consent is obtained for all student placements. Complaint and due process procedures are available in the district comprehensive plan. Parents are afforded the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

The school district has procedures for the selection, training and administrative considerations regarding the appointment of a surrogate parent for a child with disabilities. A list of individuals who would serve as a surrogate parents is available in the district.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Parent surveys
- Student surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Personnel training
- Budget information

#### **Meets Requirements**

The steering committee concluded that annual goals are skill based, linked to the present levels of performance and functional assessment. The need for related services and extended school year services are considered when developing the IEP. A copy of the IEP is given to the teacher at the beginning of the school year and after it has been reviewed annually.

The IEP team considers the students participation with non-disabled peers and develops a written justification as to why instruction could not be conducted in the regular classroom setting. Parents are

informed of how and when progress will be reported and progress reports are sent on a regular basis. Parents are notified one year in advance of their child's anticipated graduation date.

### **Out of Compliance**

The steering committee concluded the present levels of performance did not consistently contain skill based strengths and weakness, the student's involvement in the general curriculum or parent input.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under individual education program as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Needs Improvement**

Through a review of student records the monitoring team noted improvement in the activities and services provided to student as part of their transition plans. The district needs to continue developing coordinated sets of activities for students which promote movement to post-school activities.

### **Out of compliance**

#### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program**

Each student's individualized education program shall include:

- (1) A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, including:
  - (a) How the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- (2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:
  - (a) Meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum.

Through a review of student records, the monitoring team found the present levels of performance did not include a statement of how the student's disability affected their involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

#### **ARSD 24:05:27:12. Graduation requirements**

Completion of an approved secondary special education program with a regular high school diploma signifies that the student no longer requires special education services. Graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma constitutes a change in placement requiring written prior notice in accordance with this article.

The instructional program shall be specified on the individual educational program. The individual educational program shall state specifically how the student in need of special education or special education and related services will satisfy the district's graduation requirements. Parents must be informed through the individual educational program process at least one year in advance of the intent to graduate their child upon completion of the individual educational program and to terminate services by graduation.

Through a review of student records and interview, the IEPs for three students did not state specifically how the student would satisfy the district's graduation requirements.

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- E – Enrollment information
- F – Placement alternatives
- N – Monitoring data
- G – Disabling conditions
- I – Age and placement alternative data
- J – Data by disabling condition and placement
- File Reviews
- Surveys

#### **Meets Requirements**

The steering committee concluded student programs are developed prior to determining placement on the continuum of least restrictive environment.

#### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded the district needs to reevaluate least restrictive environment and the amount of time students with specific learning disabilities spend out of the classroom compared to the state average. Removal from the regular education classroom is determined by the needs of students when regular educators do not make the necessary modifications.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets Requirement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.

#### **Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees the district needs to reevaluation least restrictive environment and the amount of time students spend out of the classroom. The district needs to review student IEPs to ensure the amount of time students spend in the regular classroom for services is documented correctly. Through file reviews and interview the team identified situations where the amount of time a para-professional spent with a student in their classroom was counted as resource room time.